

P5 635.29 A823

INNOCENT VICTIM

A PLAY

*Dealing with Love and Marriage
of the*

“UNFIT”

BY JESSE ASHMAN

111 E. Baltimore St.



PRICE 35 CENTS

INNOCENT VICTIM

A PLAY

*Dealing with Love and Marriage
of the*

“UNFIT”

BY JESSE ASHMAN



PRICE 35 CENTS

PS635
Z9A823

COPYRIGHTED, 1918, BY JESSE ASHMAN
OF
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, U. S. A.

All Rights Reserved



©Cl.D 49872

THE DAILY RECORD COMPANY, BALTIMORE, MD.

JUN 29 1918

meat.

DEDICATED MOST LOVINGLY
TO
K. L. R.



JESSE ASHMAN

PREFACE.

Imagine the lawyer fighting the case of his deaf and dumb client, who is being falsely accused of a serious offense! Justice? It is burning in the defender like the "bush" which burned, but was not consumed! The thought of an "innocent victim" not even being able to "complain" that *she* (it may be a "he") is facing moral and physical ruin—that thought! Reading the play—not enough. Witnessing the play carries its message into the minds and hearts of people everywhere—an emotional lesson so thoroughly learned as to have us periodically absorbed in our "memories." So the heaven might work spontaneously.

Yet the problem remains unsolved. "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Nor is the crisis over. The unfortunate, afflicted client has not as yet been exonerated—still waiting to be freed, though now somewhat realizing the peril. But we must look to the day when KNOWLEDGE shall combine with ACTION for the purpose of alleviating human pain and suffering and substituting health and happiness. Power of speech comes only from power of heart

and of consequent life; wisdom of speech only from wisdom of understanding.

Gather then these little counsels; gather them with watchfulness. Let them for a moment penetrate deep into your heart; then scatter them abroad again, that they may go with their good words to the help of others—seeking to convey a transient blessing utilized in streams of living force.

This play deals with a very serious subject, and advocates, doubtless, much-needed reforms. It touches closely upon the subject of the marriage of unfit persons being restricted by law, the necessity of such restraint, and the results of the present laxity. It also dwells, in a novel interesting fashion, upon the emotion of LOVE and its action and reaction.

As a cure of these matrimonial miseries, the author adds a NEW COMMANDMENT: THOU SHALT NOT MARRY THE UNFIT.

J. A.

Baltimore, 1918.

INNOCENT VICTIM.

ACT I.

SCENE—Representing the living-room of the Jones summer-house, fitted up for a graduation party. Singing bright, cheerful songs. Popular and catchy songs of the day. Dancing, etc.

(Curtain rising, shows Miss Emily Jones looking through the window at the setting sun, which all gradually fades out of sight. She draws a verbal picture of Nature's beauty and veiled significance.)

EMILY (*prophetically*). I am watching the detached red spots amid the flaming rays of the setting sun, scatt'ring his beams about him as he sinks. When darkness of false paths is visible, venture to go your way, that is so guided, that you cannot stray.

(Enter Alice, Emily's sister.)

ALICE (*pointing in direction of rising sun*). When one door is shut, another opens, admitting one to a higher, freer region where the light of the sun is not dimmed by cloud and fog, where beauty never fades—"the happy ending."

EMILY (*to Alice*). In my flower of youth, I am about to make my plunge into

life's whirlpool, and so events from now onward will turn as the wheel of fate revolves. Love is the price of love! I love and am beloved of—secrecy! My beloved is mine, and I am his.

(Enter guests, entertaining themselves in various ways.)

EMILY *(thoughtfully)*. I hear the eleventh hour just striking. It is time for action! DO IT QUICK!

(At same moment Emily receives telegram, which reads thus: Uncle Sam, fighting to make the world safe for democracy, looking to "boys" of military age to stand acid test of Government physical examination. Report to Local Board before day is over.)

EMILY *(expressing blended sentiments of love, sorrow, and patriotism)*. The soul secured in her existence, smiles at the drawn dagger, and defies its point.

O friends, be men, and let your hearts be strong,
And let no warrior in the heat of fight
Do what may bring him shame in others' eyes;
For more of those who shrink from shame
are safe

Than fall in battle, while with those who
flee

Is neither glory nor reprieve from death.

Who would not be that youth? What pity that we can die but once to save our country, world Freedom and Democracy! Our renowned victories of universal war and ultimate triumph of righteous cause are bound to bring permanent international peace. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Earth shall rejoice in light and wisdom, and men deal justly by one another.

(Officers are seen drilling Privates for physical and mental development—to stand up and FIGHT for RIGHT.)

(Exit, Emily and Eugene Carter left alone.)

EMILY (*nervously*). Eugene, do you believe in love at first sight?

EUGENE (*expecting the inevitable to come*). Why, I think there's no love but love at first sight. On the first view to say, to swear, "I love thee." Yet we must not deny the existence of an ideal, sentimental love, based upon mental qualities. The ideal love comes in "small" packages of

"love tested and purified in the fire of the intellect."

EMILY (*blushing*):

'Tis not quite a week since we've met,
The moment I shall ne'er forget;
My heart is yours, just as yours is mine,
Yet 'tis time for us to part
And that is more by far than art.

(*Embracc.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE—Room scantily furnished as Local Board's office. Door on right leading to examination room: left, opens on street.

(*Curtain rises discovering Dr. Green, of the local board, reading letter.*)

Dear Dr. Green: It is very gratifying to make known the fact that the provisions of the bill regulating marriage in this State were enacted into a law, which does not, however, take effect immediately. The Act provides, among other things, that the Health Department shall have exclusive charge of and consult specialists in conducting medical examinations of the would-be bride and bridegroom. and, in order to in-

sure enforcement of this Act, shall be given a Marriage-Council, who shall only occupy themselves with the scientific aspects of the work and with propaganda.

Such legislation is sorely needed for protection of our children from hasty, objectionable, and ruinous marriages. What part of humanity at present, when health is the soul of society, will despise such new social reforms? Marriages should be entered into with sobriety, discretion and due regard for the solemnity of the holy state of matrimony.

Altogether the Act, by virtue of many good remedies therein prescribed, should be known as a cure of love-melancholy, which is so irresistible and violent a passion. Read the Statute.

Believing this to be a promising beginning on intelligent lines, I am,

DR. WHITE, Health Commissioner.

(*Enter No. 1.*)

No. 1 (*looking at his postal card*). Dr. Green, I received notice to be and appear before my local board for a physical examination. I think, though, I can't stand before such test.

DR. (*sympathetically*). Young man, what seems to be the matter with you? You're in poor health, isn't it so?

NO. 1 (*looking discouraged*). Why, Doctor, I think it quite serious a case. Whenever I cough I notice that my ears whistle.

DR. (*smilingly*). That's a minor ailment, if anything. I'll give you something to stop your cough and then you will not even imagine any pain. There is no doubt but you will make a splendid soldier.

NO. 1. Thank you, Doctor. I'm very happy indeed to be able to serve my country.

(*Exit.*)

(*A knock is heard. Enter No. 2.*)

NO. 2. Doctor, you see, I feel considerable pain in the left leg (*indicating*).

DR. (*tapping it*). How can you consistently complain of an artificial limb and of a missing member hurting you? You can't answer that. There is, of course, a scientific explanation for the phenomenon. Simple imagination, an entirely internal idea, may dominate perception to such an extent that sensations of pain, intense disorders of function, even death, may result. At any rate, I pronounce you a cripple and will therefore exempt you from the draft.

NO. 2 (*worried*). Doctor, is this matter confidential? Can't I tell my sweetheart that the reason why I was exempted is because—imagine any good bluff will do.

DR. (*angrily*). Sir, behold the ruin you will have wrought with your deception. Your girl may not like cripples. She ought to know the truth and then—love (?).

NO. 2 (*disgusted*). I surely feel the responsibility, but must keep a secret of this sort to myself—they're all doing it.

(*Exit.*)

(*Bell rings. No. 3 admitted.*)

NO. 3 (*boldly*). Doctor, I don't wish to consult you. My visit here is purely on Government affairs. I have never been sick a day in my life. If you don't draft me, I'll enlist anyhow.

DR. (*looking pleased and patiently consulting a little book*). The rule is that no person, however patriotic, shall be admitted to Camp without a previous examination, or without placing himself under oath to answer the physician's questions truthfully.

NO. 3 (*cowardly*). I as yet never served for perjury. The law, as I see it, is too mighty to be trifled with. To tell the truth,

I am unfortunately afflicted with the "falling sickness."

DR. (*in thundering tones*). Rejected!

No. 3 (*retreating to door*). When I was stricken before my sweetheart, she hurried after all the physicians in town. Before the first one had arrived, I fully recovered. I made her believe, without an extraordinary amount of labor on my part, that I "fell for her." Thus she is still ignorant of my malady. I concede, however, the proposition that falsehoods of this character should not be tolerated. The law, in a proper case, must speak and exact the virgin truth, even from lovers. But love's a malady without a cure. Ha! ha! ha!

DR. (*springing forward and grasping his hand*). If you really love your girl you will not be believed until you conclusively prove it by committing suicide on her account. Your style of merely "falling for her" isn't enough for you.

No. 3 (*nodding*). I've already decided to do that (*Dr. applauds*), but for other good reasons.

(*Exit.*)

(*Door opens, and No. 4 rushes boldly in, anxiously followed by his mother.*)

MOTHER (*to Dr.*). You really must excuse me, sir, for coming in without ringing, but my son——

DR. (*replying quickly*). Oh! pshaw! What's the use of standing on ceremony. This being a public place, there is an implied license for the public to enter during business hours.

MOTHER. Quite right, Doctor. I can come in mostly anytime, but just don't know exactly about my getting out. My boy is an orphan, and his father had died and left me to struggle with him when he was only an infant of one year of age. Now, my poor child is sick all over. He is a bright, intelligent boy, too.

DR. (*taking medicine bottle from Mother and smelling contents, and then making remark permeated with sarcasm*). Madam, perhaps the casual observer could scarcely realize the fact that your son is afflicted with so many maladies. But to a skilled physician it at once becomes apparent that there is something wrong. In spite of that, an examination cannot be dispensed with, and you should never object to that policy. In my opinion camp life may do him good and cure him.

NO. 4 (*seeing his mother fainting in Doctor's arms, who revives her by a stimulant*). For mine—— (*Fearing his poor mother who understands that her boy is eager to get into action against the enemy.*)

DR. (*impatiently*). Madam, if you would only step aside and let me make a diagnosis of your boy's case I could promptly make up my mind how to dispose of it.

MOTHER (*tearfully*). Look! look! he is dying—dying to serve (*when she observes the boy taking a rifle-aim*). Doctor, my boy is getting married to the best girl living, and there he is preparing to go to the hospital. If his girl finds out that he is not as healthy as he represented himself to be—God knows he didn't tell her the truth—who knows what will happen. (*In anguish.*) Well, I must reconcile myself to my lot.

(*Mother shielding her boy as Doctor attempts to take his temperature.*)

DR. (*with decision*). Madam, you are virtually a pest around here. I order you to leave the premises at once. The Government must apply the acid test. It takes no chances, so better go! (*Pointing furiously at the door.*)

MOTHER (*tearfully throwing her arms around her boy and kissing him*). I am leaving you here in good hands. Good-bye, my son. . . .

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE—As in Act 1, except room is plainly furnished.

(*Curtain rising, exposes Eugene Carter, Ira Alving, and George Lee discussing their previous experience at the Draft Board's office.*)

EUGENE. Boys, do you know that Dr. Green, of the local board, detected in me the presence of consumption of the lungs in the incipient stage, which utterly disqualified me from military duty. The best I can do is to tell Emily that my exemption is due to an industrial plea which I had filed previous to the physical examination. Emily is a sensible girl, and any intimation of my condition will worry her and give me enough trouble to convince her to the contrary.

IRA. And me he threw out of the draft because he thinks my brain is too dull, defective—a weakling. The Dr. said he was very sorry to see a man of my physique

turned down by the Government on account of inferior mentality. I had to give him my family history and even go as far as introducing him to an idiot brother of mine. I can't simply understand what it all means—he is “not right.”

(*Alice's photograph attracts him.*) Oh, my darling, where are you—Ah! (*Throwing kisses at her.*) My excuse will be “dependency.”

GEORGE. The incident does sound like a dream, but in reality the shadow of the vice menace is looming blacker upon us daily. A very dangerous black spot in the white soft mantle of youth that dims the globe.

Let me tell you (*but, of course, there's a reason why we shan't tell it to our life partners*) the unvarnished truth. My blood was tested and venereal infection found in my system, which will unfit me for duty for months—a monstrous sin! Yes, you see, boys, won't you stop it? Dr. Green advised that, this being a communicable disease, laws should be enacted in every state including same in the list of communicable diseases which it is the duty of the physician to report and of the health authorities to isolate and quarantine, the same as smallpox and

scarlet fever, etc. The Dr. also remarked that the INNOCENT VICTIM will arouse men to maintain for themselves the same standard of sex morality they require for women. Of course, the Dr. is necessarily a scientific man, and, perhaps, never was himself in love (*forbidden*).

Well, let us be human. But aren't you fellows in soft—right here in the home of your "angels ready made for heaven." I wonder where my little "angel" is flying about looking for her dearest! I'll try to get her on the wire. (*Gaily.*) O I remember her saying she would spend the day in company with the Jones sisters. I'm expecting them home every moment. Ha, ha, ha! I'll tell my girl that the physician at the local board extended me a special invitation to join the army, but, owing to a previous "engagement" with her, could not for the present accept his offer, and that I thanked him for the compliment.

EUGENE (*picking up newspaper and noticing headline, which shocks him*). There it is! Look at it! What are we going to do!

IRA (*coolly*). What's all the excitement about?

EUGENE (*nervously*). Here! Read it yourself.

IRA (*hesitating*). Eugene, the pleasure is all yours. (*Registering a negative awkward gesture.*) This stuff they claim is printed in fifth-class English—I failed some how in the third grade. Now, can that be made plainer to you!

EUGENE (*reading aloud the startling news*):

HEALTH MARRIAGE ACT IN FORCE TOMORROW MORNING—Health Commissioner White announced that the Health Marriage Act takes effect to-morrow morning, and he expressed his firm belief in the Administrative Department which is an educative force back of the law to create public sentiment that will demand clean morals among men as a qualification for respectability and marriage.

Such legislation should be enforced in a spirit of love of mankind and of elevating, purifying, and refining the race, in which event it is bound immensely to improve the individuals of which the race is made up.

It may be assumed that every conscientious physician will readily co-operate with the authorities, since he must be in perfect sympathy with this movement. The Act further provides that "both parties shall be

medically examined before marriage by specialists, under the auspices of the health officials, who shall restrict the marriage of unfit persons."

(Eugene is observed raising his hand to his temple planning his next move, Ira is kneeling before Alice's portrait whispering prayers, while George is rushing to 'phone, removing receiver, but too excited to speak.)

EUGENE *(to George)*. Whom are you calling?

GEORGE *(feeling his chill fingers closing upon his labored breathing)*. The a—gent of the ex—cur—sion b-o-a—t. *(Calms down.)* I'll beg him to intercept the girls and ask them to expect us there in half an hour. From that "bright corner" there will be easy sailing.

EUGENE. No! You're still too excited. Adjust the receiver. Your attempt may not finally be crowned with success, for acting on the outside at this late hour will put us in bad with the police, who might pick us up as suspicious characters. Then the reporters will get hold of the story and print it, too. I have in mind an idea that will work like magic. *(Turning to Ira.)* Stop praying, the boat is rocking. Get to work! If

the torpedo only explodes, as it likely will, we're going to perish (*not to Paris*)!

IRA (*rising, briskly—frightened*). Yes, my troubles really started when *Mother* was "rocking my cradle." When the Dr. said my "brains is dusty" he meant that I am incapable of foreseeing and powerless to prevent the threatening danger of the torpedo, which frequently "elopes" and thus proves harmless. I can only feel the actual explosion and "go down." I'd rather not be born to cope with the complex problems and struggles of civilization, than existing and not having a proper place—a safe place in the world—to live in. Why am I a "back number?"

EUGENE (*to George*). We'll not elope, that is, abandon the premises "where we are" and go "somewhere." We'll stick right here. Call up the nearest Minister of the Gospel to perform a triangular ceremony. Go ahead!

GEORGE (*low, higher, still higher key*). Central, connect me with Madison 1600. Hurry, hurry! Father Shaw, kindly order a taxicab to take you down to 25 Courtland street. The fine for speeding is hereby (*thereby*) guaranteed. There's a fat job on hand. Good-bye.

EUGENE (*anticipating possible detection*). The surprised ladies might ask this question, "What is the occasion for 'midnight performances' and why in haste?" The answer is that we were all ordered to leave for France at a little after midnight, and the safest thing is to marry while we are still alive (*in love*).

IRA (*believing Eugene's scheme to be a fact*). Eugene is right, we haven't much time to spare if we slip away to-night for France.

(*Bell rings. Enter the Jones sisters and Miss Fanny Marks, George's lady-love, emotionally displaying genuine love for their friends. The floodgates of feeling are loosened, and the full tide of mutual affection gushes forth uncontrolled, as though there were romance in the air of mystery.*)

EUGENE (*getting at his lady's ear and "popping the question"*). Emily, to all intents and purposes there unexpectedly arrived the long-looked-for opportunity to enter into the "silken bands of matrimony." A man is never well settled in the saddle of his fortune until he be married. He wants spring, purpose and aim; and, above all, he wants a home as the centre of his efforts.

The reason why I am popping the question at this time is because I am in the draft and must leave for France in the next few hours. Do you consent, darling?

EMILY (*her eyes instantly sparkling with delight*). Yes, if you are able and willing to defend your country.

GEORGE (*to Fanny*). The same is true of me. Fanny, love, do you, too, consent?

FANNY (*instantly*). Yes, under all conditions present.

IRA (*to Alice*). I'm brave enough for any emergency! (*Turning to Eugene, pointingly.*) Spare your saucy little words—looks to me as we were wasting the Government's valuable time. Why don't you better tell the truth—Father Shaw is due here any moment, and before we know it we shall be married and in an army aeroplane be off for France. And although I had been rejected, I'll still make the men in khaki take me back!

ALICE. How do you mean—mean rejected?

EUGENE (*motioning Ira to shut up*). He of course means by the Life Insurance Company on account of the war.

IRA (*perplexed*). Oh, dear no! (*His voice is drowned by the sound of the door-bell.*)

(*Emily opens door and admits Father Shaw.*)

IRA. Good news is awaiting you in the house, Father.

FATHER. Oh, I had experienced the pains and, in an unexpected way, the pleasures of being in a taxi accident.

IRA. Yes, you seem to be glad because you have our guarantee to pay your fine for speeding, eh?

FATHER. Oh, no! Nothing like that—no arrests were made. I simply landed in the University Hospital, where I had met a well-known physician through whose devotion to mankind I had learned the nature of my present task which I am here called upon to perform at this psychological moment when the momentous decision will reach us upon *the* question of public policy.

IRA. Father, I'll not argue with you in the face of what was just said by the witness, but you have unconsciously strayed from the main issue involved in this case. Coming back to the accident, state whether or not you received permanent injuries to

your head, body and limbs as a result of this accident—if you did, to what extent?

FATHER. No. Shock is the only injury I have sustained.

IRA. Isn't it a fact that the shock complained of was caused by the x-ray?

FATHER. The shock is directly due to your clever cross-examination.

IRA. Father, I'm tickled to hear you praise my cross-questioning. But they all say I am exceedingly brilliant, although Dr. Green once expressed himself to the effect that I did not possess a clear intellect, and that such trait runs through my family. Ha! ha!

FATHER. Now I am doubly shocked! How can I witness with my mental eye such specimen of humanity venturing upon the sacred, yet none the less vital, sea of matrimony! You apparently possess only a thimbleful of brains without good measure.

EUGENE (*reflecting*). Well, are you ready to begin the ceremony, Father?

FATHER (*abruptly*). No! No! I think that I had reached the opinion that by describing to you my accident you will learn a very profitable lesson in life—it carries a

message of inspiration, like that of the artist in the presence of his model. I will begin now, and when I finish the matter will be left with you for your determination, right or wrong—subject always to the “law of the land.”

My taxicab, when whirled at breakneck speed through dense traffic and around sharp turns on slippery streets, suddenly swerved or skidded to the left, whereby it inevitably came in contact with a Ford run-about going in the opposite direction rather slowly, not exceeding the thirty-five-mile limit, and with terrific force split the latter's motor into two unequal parts. While one part thereof kept on spinning 'round the globe, incidently “doing its bit” in the industrial world, the other flew like an airship. I, like a very modest, unassuming kind of hero aviator, calmly steered its course toward “heavenly abodes.”

Suddenly, I felt the machine isn't functioning perfectly. The next moment I saw the engine isn't running, and then I was up in the air for fair—lost consciousness. The Ford aeroplane readjusted itself automatically and was finally brought down by the law of gravitation, which took its course. But by the “benefit of shock” I came to my

senses and then immediately resumed my earthly duties and did mind earthly things.

Is not this something more than fantasy? While the imagination brings us with it in paradise of love, the material world is constantly engaged in scientific analysis of sin and disharmonies of nature. We have thus a little bit of pleasure at the expense of great suffering. We take the liberty, but have no "bond of security." What are we going to do about it?

(Bell rings. Emily goes to the door and admits Dr. White and his nurse.)

IRA *(goes to nurse)*. Do you really think this house looks like a hospital—another smashup! Who's that patient? *(Pointing at the Doctor.)* Was he also shocked and did he see "stars" and fly in a half-Ford runabout, too?

NURSE *(duty-like)*. Young man, I am not here advertising Ford's or any other machine. That man is Dr. White, the Health Commissioner, and I am one of his nurses—Leah Jacobs is my name.

IRA. Well, then, I'll also introduce myself as——

LEAH *(interrupts him)*. Never mind your introduction. I know all of you. Your

local board records are now on our files—your identity isn't in dispute, either.

IRA. Isn't true that your vision is defective?

LEAH. Why?

IRA (*in undertone*). Because Jacob loved Rachel and not Leah.

LEAH. You've got your "dates mixed." I was sent here to cure you—you're my patients. No marriage for sometime to come, if at all.

IRA (*feeling his pulse*). Will the medicine taste sweet or bitter?

LEAH. It's a kind of bitter "pill" to take, but a safe cure.

DR. (*looking up*). The first duty of the Doctor is to demand absolute frankness. It is to your own interest to be frank, for no marriage founded on deceit can be happy.

EMILY (*has not the least suspicion at present*). Father, in the name of frankness, I demand that you exercise your professional duty. Do hastily perform the wedding ceremony—I insist on that. We're losing precious time.

DR. Pardon my intervention. The Book of Nature is not agreed with itself on fol-

lowing this course. Since Man has long abused and corrupted Nature, she now justly retaliates by forbidding certain marriage. Purify her laws, and you are free from danger under her protective wing.

ALICE (*the butterfly*). Why do the lovely birds eat out of our hands and fly away to the land of the "free," where there is liberty?

EMILY (*in a low voice—understanding*). The birds play with and are fed by our children, both being innocent and pure, but when the songsters flutter at our windows and imprudently fly into the cage, and when the children become of age, the so-called liberty turns over another page and tells a different story. After all, liberty is a relative term, depending on the age in which we live and *how* we live.

IRA. All this talk is an idle consumption of time. There will be "something doing" when we hear of the boys who have fallen "over there." Nobody could visualize the war in Europe without actually seeing it.

EUGENE. Well, the idea of going to France is abandoned. We're not that fortunate. But the time had come to talk marriage, and get married. A postponement

might mean—indefinitely—we'll soon be "within the law." (*Hoping against hope.*) The question in my mind is, What power on earth can stop us? Couldn't love find its way through paths where wolves would fear to prey?

FATHER. Strong are the instincts with which God has guarded the sacredness of marriage. But hasty marriage never proveth well.

DR. (*eloquently*). There won't be a hasty marriage any more. The law has wisely thrown its safeguards around marriage in a way hitherto unknown to civilization. Every man is a worse man in proportion as he is unfit for the marriage state.

The Government was left free to reach actions which were in violation of social duties, or subversive of good order. We will proceed to examine the question before us "in the light of general authority and sound reason." A new conception of RIGHTS and DUTIES has dawned upon men.

If it be true, on one hand, that the heart of man naturally delights in liberty, and hates everything to which it is confined, it is also true, on the other, that the heart of man naturally submits to necessity, and soon loses

an inclination, when there appears an absolute impossibility of gratifying it. This being true, NECESSITY itself demands that the "horrors" tried for centuries by "tainted" humanity on pure, innocent blood shall not be repeated or longer experienced—THE HALT OF DEGENERACY!

(Ira grows pale and Alice hands him a glass of water, which he can't take off the tray without exerting his will-power to the utmost. Fanny falls into Leah's arms, while George remains sitting dejectedly on the piano stool. Emily is visibly moved by the Doctor's appeal, as she reaches Eugene's hand appreciably sober-minded.)

FATHER *(with an air of satisfaction)*.
The ceremony is indefinitely postponed!

(Ira, shivering, drops glass from hand.)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE—Placed close to the Adam farmhouse somewhere "over there" far away from civilization amidst the Devil and his works.

(Curtain rises discovering Innocence sitting on a bench melodiously singing to Cre-

ation amid bewilderment of tree trunks and underbrush, opposite the tree of life, and the Devil, with suitcase in hand, passing her rapidly—he returns and is seated himself beside Innocence.)

INNOCENCE (*getting up quickly*). The nerve of you! Who're you, anyway?

DEVIL (*charms her*). My name is Mr. Devil. But what brought a bewitching little darling like you in this most fashionable residential section of the world?

INNOCENCE (*as if unconcerned*). To me it's merely a wilderness. I'll swear I'm lost here.

DEVIL (*unlocks suitcase and takes out a bottle of wine*). Won't you have a little wine to quench your thirst?

INNOCENCE. No!

DEVIL (*gets her hand with the result that the stronger will prevails*). Have a drink anyhow—you'll feel refreshed.

INNOCENCE (*accepts, pauses and, regaining her balance after reflecting for a brief moment, opens her eyes, conquers the passions, summons her will-power and, being now in full possession of her faculties, returns the "gift" to Devil, in an air of satis-*

faction of being quite able to take care of herself, though rather not to be tempted—avoid such company). It's no pity that Vice has recently received an almost fatal blow—a moral victory!

DEVIL, (*staggers and looks like they finished him up, but rapidly changes his expression*). Not knowing what you're talking about, I can still see that your name is Innocence. I love you. (*He kisses her hand; she pulls it away sharply.*)

INNOCENCE (*feeling her face is growing burning hot*). I, too, loved you the first moment I saw you—the first glance was sufficient. But now—your camouflage kiss and its complications are not at all amusing. (*A very long silence.*)

DEVIL (*placing politely his arm around her*). May I take you through the Garden of Eden, beauty?

INNOCENCE (*determinedly*). No, not even a peep will I take within the Golden Gate and around its enchanting grounds, or whatever its mysteries——

DEVIL (*shrewdly*). Ah! is pleasure not yours? Are you that kind—am I not surprised? Now think it over, but don't think too much. Let's go——

INNOCENCE (*indignantly, though nervously*). Why, Miss Emily Jones finally regretted the little bit of paradise she prematurely saw. For mine, I'll consult REASON before it has drowned, buried and lost itself in FASCINATION—deep in love is deep in water.

An angel may stoop to see,
And bless me for my purity.

DEVIL (*curiously*). What, if anything, had happened to Miss Jones?

INNOCENCE. Why, Emily is a friend of mine. She fell in love with a fine young man—at first sight.

DEVIL (*carelessly*). Suppose she did, what of it?

INNOCENCE (*instructively*). Well, here's where they all blunder. Let me give you my view of love, in the light of recent discoveries and common sense which we now know how to exercise and develop. (*For authority see the Health Marriage Act and consult the Health Officials—that you can't escape, and you SHOULDN'T.*)

DEVIL. Yes, certainly, your view is based upon public sentiment as I understand it, and I'm afraid some of the devilish works will be condemned—well, never mind

I'll see that love is precisely what it used to be—no changes and no reforms are desirable and things don't suit me as they are. (*To himself.*) Am Devil enough to control and repeal such legislation and such fancy laws spread so early in Man's career upon the Statute Books—it lies all in my hands. Don't you know, it's been worrying me a good deal—I'm the first one to be affected by your Social Reforms! I should make a personal sacrifice and benefit humanity thereby—I can't see it that way. (*To Innocence, entreatingly.*) But love to know what's going on, and don't keep me in suspense—I'll faint.

INNOCENCE. But why shouldn't you tell the truth—you have a weak heart, for that matter, any disease—it'll be tested at some place at some time as one of the prerequisites of marriage.

DEVIL.. You're making it worse for me—proceed, won't you?

INNOCENCE. Well, if you like I will go into it this moment—of course, it is to your advantage to know it all—but nothing will help you—you're lost.

DEVIL.. If you ever professed to have a spark of love for me—but you're some teaser.

INNOCENCE. I've got a message to deliver to the world and I shall get right down to business, to come straight to the point, so listen—(*Devil placing hand to ear.*)

INNOCENCE. Love usually proceeds through two stages, the first being one of mere mutual attraction and interest. It is in this stage that the will and reason are operative, and here alone that any considerable elevation of standard may be effective. But love once established defies rational consideration—the second and last stage. The beauty of it is that in the first stage it is under the control of many influences, including influences of reason.

DEVIL. Is that what you call love?

INNOCENCE. These are the ordinary psychological facts.

DEVIL. Can you give an illustration?

INNOCENCE. I'll use the Devil as one.

DEVIL. Help yourself—now keep to the point.

(*Suddenly, the distant echo of strange voices fall from "somewhere" crying, "Devil! Devil! The Royal Family is threatened!" As he spiritually disappears from sight, the lights go out and the faint roar of a lion rings out of the jungle.*)

INNOCENCE (*trembling and fearing the beast as its roar grows louder, she runs about panic-stricken, ending with prayer*). O living God, shut the lion's mouth, and he will not hurt me; forasmuch as before Him innocence is found in me; O God, and also before Thee, I have done no hurt.

DEVIL (*enters and grabs Innocence by the arm*). Quick, let's run to Paradise! This is a dangerous place for a little girl like you!

INNOCENCE. But God answered my prayer and said there shall be light and there will be light. (*The lights are turned on.*) Ah! this was a mean little trick of yours, you Devil. Your point was to get me in a mood to blindly follow you in love. (*Triumphantly.*) But this——

DEVIL. Does your new philosophy answer every question pertaining to love? Assuming it does, what is, or should be, the rule when one falls in love with a fascinating beautiful young widow?

INNOCENCE. Yes. Say, you've hit the nail on the head—Dupe! you are deceived already. I might add that the imagination here has been so active that a period of possession and indulgence dispels the charm.

Each, then, begins to think that an error has been committed; and each suspects the other of regretting it. But before this unpleasant discovery passion wraps the judgment, conceals the most evident faults, colors everything in celestial purple, renders the lovers blind, and veils the true character of each from the other.

DEVIL. Here's where you've got me. I realize that the emotion of LOVE is still very little studied, and it is still wrapped in complete darkness.

INNOCENCE. Yes, a great deal of ignorance still prevails in regard to this important emotion.

DEVIL. That is what I am exactly getting at—IGNORANCE is responsible.

INNOCENCE. No wonder—no other physiological phenomenon has been approached with such hesitancy as the study of love in man. For illustration—now don't get smart again, Devil, and don't leave me here all alone in the dark—I'll surely get you in trouble for that! Follow me, Devil, (*pointing to the Scenery*). Do you see our domestic animal charming the little bird? Their eyes meet—there's magnetic attraction, the bird is intoxicated, perhaps both

are, but pussy's action is prompted by sinister motives—to feast her eye and stomach with her willing prey. Now, were there the slightest distraction the bird would be freed from this sort of intoxication, and the hypnotizer left to enjoy a “meatless holiday.” Thus you first catch your love-bird with a little feed, then inoculate her with a Devil Thought—then love plays its own independent role: sounds easy, doesn't it? But, oh, my.

Again, time and place being the essence of preventing love, don't go too quick and too far, then she may not have the astonishing good luck to captivate this young fellow, at a ball, it seems; use auto-suggestion to counteract the effect of the charms of beauty, beautiful voice, the touch of her soft little hand, of some graceful gestures, etc. Look before you leap and ask no sympathy to be shown you—unless the “game is worth the candle.” In this connection it is to be remembered that even within the limits of mental health some persons are noted for the strength of the will, and others for its feebleness.

Affirmative essentials of true love are: Man and woman led by sexual attraction, mature consideration and harmony of char-

acter coupled with a HEALTH CERTIFICATE, without which marriage is a failure—a bankrupt. Long before the parties allow themselves to fall in love there must be an understanding as to physical fitness, and the required proof adduced. They must first be convinced that they may reasonably hope to form a durable and happy union, then only may they abandon themselves to amorous intoxication (*deep love*), but not before. This idea will in due course of time instinctively and unconsciously influence the impulses of men and women, the consequent result being that standards of morality will be elevated and the health of the individual respected, nay, even loved.

DEVIL, (*rubbing his hands as if something worries him*). Why, Innocence, would you really believe that I'm a bit serious in this regard and will soon investigate the whole affair and—(*Devil mysteriously disappears.*)

(*A strange man flew breathlessly in like a veritable whirlwind, his eyes sparkling with "illusions of all the senses," crying excitedly as he climbs the trees and searches for a place of concealment.*)

INNOCENCE (*runs up to the stranger*). Weren't you chased after by that big lion!

I'm just the right one to sympathize with you—was in the same predicament and know what it is.

(Man and girl rush in.)

MAN *(to Innocence)*. May I search the house—the entire premises?

INNOCENCE. You are mistaken—I'm not the proprietor.

MAN. Well, I have a right to go the limit.

(A successful search is instituted and the stranger overpowered, when Devil suddenly appears, as usual.)

DEVIL *(to Man)*. How do you do, Dr. Johnson—what's that! who're these people?

DR. They are inmates of my Institution—parent and child. His name is Ira Alving, his daughter's name is Blanche—both are mental defectives.

DEVIL. Since I have heard so much about a Health Certificate and like philosophy, I'd appreciate the history of this apparently interesting case, at least, and especially when there is a tragedy enacted on my own soil—where I have some say.

DR. The father evaded the LAW by leaving the jurisdiction, the Statute having no

extraterritorial force. It means that no law is binding, *ex proprio vigore*, beyond the limits of the sovereignty from which it is derived. In cases of this kind, with some rare exceptions, the courts of one state will refuse to extend the principle of comity to another, and such comity is not, and hardly can be, generally recognized. The only way out of it is to have a uniform law passed regulating marriage, as proposed herein.

DEVIL. What of it if they did elope and were married elsewhere?

DR. (*sharply*). Herein lies the error. Under our law, which every person is presumed to know, which is based upon reason and humanity, such marriage is forbidden, unless certain provisions of the Act which deal with this class of cases are complied with before marriage is undertaken.

DEVIL. Well, since the question is so striking, practically affecting both alike the classes and the masses, I'd like to find out the result of this forbidden marriage and how there was issue born as a result of said wedlock.

DR. (*with deep feeling*). Because a similar law is not enacted in the sister states, it greatly hinders in this State the enforcement

of the reformatory civil legislation and the rational administration measures. In the instant case; the psychiatrist, who is the competent expert in these matters, to insure social safety, directed that this man be asked to renounce propagation by the method of sterilization, which will prevent him from being the founder of a family tending to resemble himself. But he refused to submit voluntarily to this mild operation. Then, as a means of prevention, he ordered the segregation of the defective in my asylum, from which he temporarily escaped. This girl was born before we could prevent it.

DEVIL. But what does the public generally know about feeble-minded humanity?

DR. Well, a few striking facts concerning their life on this planet will not be out of place here. The balance can be imagined—I advise personal study and observation to clear up the situation in one's mind.

DEVIL. But do not please hesitate to state the facts as they really exist. Suppressing evidence, or even coloring it, will not enlighten us.

DR. (*does hesitate awhile*). Well, I will tell you this much, and no more. If you

will visit my institution you can learn more and more how these feeble-minded creatures behave—how they retard civilization. What I want the public to know, at least, is this:

The Binet tests were applied to 300 girls who have just begun prostitution. One hundred and fifty-four were feeble-minded and eleven were insane. One hundred and thirty-five were put in the "doubtful class," as they proved to be of distinctly inferior intelligence, only a few of them ever having read a newspaper or a book, or had any real knowledge of current events, or could converse intelligently upon any but the most trivial subjects. Precocious sex interests and practices are well-known symptoms of feeble-mindedness. Many of the feeble creatures show a tendency to disease, pauperism, criminality, or else to early death.

I can recall a case of a feeble-minded man, 25 years of age, starting 45 fires within three months. The loss was estimated at a quarter of a million dollars. I know of hundreds of cases involving criminality, but to mention an additional celebrated case will suffice. A feeble-minded boy set fire to his grandfather's house, later he burned a house belonging to the father of the district attorney. He served terms in prison.

and later became religious and paroled on condition that he go to another State. He came to New York and set fire to a barn. He is now in Sing Sing. Had he been cared for in an institution at the proper time, all this damage would not have been done, or even attempted.

Heredity is the chief cause of causes of mental alienation, and a normal child is never born of two feeble-minded parents. It is to be borne in mind always that alcoholism and syphilis are contributing their full share to the upkeep of this evil. The means that have been suggested for combating bad heredity are legal restriction of marriage, surgical sterilization, and segregation.

(Exit, Devil and Dr. remaining.)

DEVIL. Doctor, your story is hardly believable. Do you mean to say that Ira's daughter is not quite as good as Innocence—I can handle her as I please?

DR. Precisely. She is just a fit candidate for you, if I only let her get on the "ticket."

DEVIL. But I'd like to demonstrate it.

DR. What! You doubt my word—that minds differ—that *heredity* plays such an important part in life!

DEVIL. But I'll promise you that I shall not deliberately hurt her. I'll just try her out as I did Innocence, but didn't succeed.

DR. Well, I will do as you say—just to convince you beyond a shadow of a doubt that I am absolutely correct. Remember, you will account to me for any damage! Don't forget she ain't Job, either. No unfair advantage.

(Exit Doctor, enter girl.)

(Here the Devil takes his own part as is peculiar to his "own" profession of misleading girls of this description, the girl responding and demonstrating her inclination to "go wrong." He finally persuades her to follow him to Paradise. The reader's imagination will be materialized when seeing the Devil in action and the girl proving by her conduct the damage done to society by giving such type of girls "full liberty.")

(Exit Devil and girl, enter Doctor.)

DR. *(inspecting the premises)*. Perhaps I shouldn't have permitted the Devil to have his own way. I wonder whether he will keep his promise. Many girls fall into the hands of the "devil" daily. But I'm impatient. "There's a reason" why——

(*Enter Devil and Girl.*)

DEVIL. Doctor, as a result of my experience and observation, you'll have this from the lips of old-time Devil, whom they have for many centuries loathed and despised. She played the game with me and let me beat her oh, so easily! till I felt myself again a man—a man of "No Man's Land—" In these circumstances, I feel obliged to admit that every word you uttered here is the exact truth. Mustn't I do that? I am not meaning to throw any bouquets at you.

But, looking to the *root* of the matter, I really think the Devil is in the wrong place—his right place is in the homes of those who believe they are, or will be, in "heaven." Morbid heredity and the vices of our blood are the "devils" which dwell, to their shame, in our homes, and are the worst kind. That's it. Morbid heredity and vice. They kill quicker than the "enemy." Yes, don't they? Well, I'll adopt a new domicile—I will quit this Garden of Eden business. I will travel in the private homes and see "home-devils" doing their destructive work. The moral of all this is that that little affair of Blanche's is costing me my job.

Yet, in extenuation of what is evil, I must admit this one thing: The impulsive

cause of these miseries in Man, this privation of destruction of God's image, the cause of death and disease, of all temporal and eternal punishments, was the sin of our first parent Adam, in eating of the forbidden fruit, by the Devil's instigation and allurements.

(Doctor motioning girl to leave. She runs up to him as he stretches his arms.)

CURTAIN.

ACT V.

SCENE—Representing Fanny's bedroom and Emily's temporary office, separated by partitions.

(We lift the curtain to look at poor innocent Fanny as she lies in bed as a patient, and at Emily, now a nurse, taking her temperature.)

EMILY. Fanny, dear, I see your temperature is steadily climbing down to normal. I hope in the next day or so I shall be able to resume my regular duties at the Board of Health, in the Marriage Department. We have already accomplished wonders since the law dealing with the marriage of unfit persons has been in force, which came just

a little too late to save my dearest friend—yourself—*innocent victim* of the old world. (*Kissing her.*) When Father Shaw postponed our marriage, you and George swiftly on the wings of love were carried, at midnight, through the startled skies, right down to the door of some other priest, who, through the discord of the late hour and the answering tread of hurrying feet,—there was tumult in the air and you saw hope in chaos,—the priest forgot the Law was to assert itself against you but in a few minutes and bar the way to marriage, and catch you as you pass. He then and there tied the marriage knot—the fateful hour!

(*Bell rings. Emily admits an attractive young lady.*)

LADY. I'd like to know results in case No. 605.

EMILY (*connecting with Marriage Department*). Let me have 605. (*She writes out report and hands it to applicant.*)

LADY (*reading report*). "Lady is O. K., but man has Tuberculosis, marriage postponed for one year—prognosis is bad." (*She weeps.*) What do you mean—my invitations are out.

EMILY. But you're some foolish girl. In olden times you'd hear them try to do

such stunts over and over again. They didn't know they were playing with fire. Besides, it all does not rest entirely with you.

LADY. As much as I love him I'd still take a chance on my life!

EMILY. Yes, I really think you mean it. You're in that frame of mind. But the observance of a command carries its reward and the transgression of a prohibition its punishment—THE LAW is supreme. And cause and effect always go together and a transgression of natural law is followed by its appropriate reaction.

LADY. But I am madly in love with him—can't forget him. (*Meditatively.*) What is the nature of the disease, anyhow? Is it so serious?

EMILY. Well, it only destroys and consumes lung tissue, if it occurs in the lungs. The bacilli themselves secrete poisons, which are depressing to the heart, which cause fever and a general weakening of the heart; the nutrition and strength are exhausted in forming useless structures.

LADY. How does it affect other people, and what if we marry now?

EMILY. Now you talk like a very sensible girl and I will therefore answer your questions to convince you how serious the matter is—you'll feel that I need your sympathy and co-operation as much as you need mine. Listen to me, darling, I will enlighten you on the subject. Marriage exercises a sinister influence on tuberculosis; for the female especially, it should be definitely discouraged: "Maid, no marriage; wife, no children; mother, no nursing." Matrimonial contagion is well attested and extremely common. Hereditary predisposition to tuberculosis (susceptibility to receive it and permit it to germinate) is extremely frequent—the children suffer. Again, the virus of the dread disease is contained in the sputum, which when dry is widely disseminated in the form of dust, and constitutes the great medium for the transmission of the disease. Special danger is believed to exist when the contact is very intimate, as between man and wife. It is quite true that normal blood possesses a certain amount of substances which are inimical to the life of our bacterial foes. But suppose a person gets run down; every one knows he is then liable to "catch anything." Intemperance of every kind lowers the bodily

resistance and makes a ready opening for the disease to get a foothold.

LADY. You might be right as far as you went. But can you further explain how the law is fighting my battle when I'm not even facing the enemy—nothing that I can see that will hurt me, is it the "Silent Menace?"

EMILY. Yes, you've practically answered yourself. Let us not forget that this is not the thunder of the cannon—it's a silent, treacherous war. We cannot remain passive because the enemy invades our land subtly and silently, but we must mobilize our resources and our energies so that we may attack this formidable adversary that is invisible to the naked eye save under the microscope slide—the infinitely tiny monster, the tubercular germ.

LADY. Very well, then. It's all true. Still you wouldn't apply it to yourself—you'd say let nature take its course, or what has science to do with love, isn't it true?

EMILY. Darling, you will feel much better when you hear that I was once in your "shoes." I felt then as you feel now—maybe a little worse.

LADY. And how did you behave yourself—"act foolish" and gave in, or——

EMILY. I parted with him forever—applied the law of “conquering love” which affords a permanent cure.

LADY. Love-cure! Oh-h-h, love-cure!

EMILY. If it wasn't true—well, I'd never be where I am—talking with you or anybody else—would be where all the great people are, in——

LADY. What did really happen to you, by the way?

EMILY. Just this: One night the priest was at my home when I was nearly married to my “first-love.” But I was made aware of the law restricting such marriage and of my lover's condition—the same case is now confronting you—when I had suddenly remembered and finally acted against the visions of the “setting sun” and rather chose to act in harmony with my prophecy “not to enter false paths,” when I accordingly refrained from saying “yes” when law and prudence demanded “no!” I could have practically evaded the law as did my unfortunate sister—Alice—her belief being in “happy endings.” A serious proposition she never would take seriously. She is now struggling to earn her own living, while her husband, Ira, and Blanche, her only child,

are confined in a feeble-minded institution—she's almost losing her mind, too. It makes me cry when I think of it all. (*Wiping her eyes.*)

LADY. When the priest refused to marry you, was it good on your nerves?

EMILY. But you mustn't let your nerves walk away with you. I too had to struggle with myself for a while, then took up the study of the psychology of "Conquering Love." After I had mastered my subject, I was in a position to appreciate the good noble work of the social workers. You could do the same—follow my example.

LADY. Is there really such a thing as getting rid of the emotion of love? If that's possible, I'd like to get from you a few pointers.

EMILY. Well, I shall give you now a few ideas in regard to the new art, and the remaining points you'll get at the principal office—hope to get back there next week. Love isn't permanent—time and separation and other interests must wear it off—otherwise it would certainly kill many, and, as a matter of fact, I haven't had a dead one since I have been in this business. The imagination would not be quite as vivid in

loving if you could not see him. Slowly, very slowly, you'll forget him—positively. Again, auto-suggestion will help to cure it. The idea of yawning makes one yawn; the idea of loving makes one love still more; the idea of dismissing the beloved person from one's life makes the latter feel—perhaps like hating. Fasting is recommended by a high authority—love grows cool without bread and wine. Above all, remember that there is such a thing as love at *second* sight—loving a second or a third man equally as good, especially when the first lover is forgotten, as there are many “attractions.”

LADY. Thanks. I'll see you again next week—will carefully study my first lesson in the meantime.

(*Exit.*)

(*Nurse hastens to attend to patient, when door-bell rings. She goes back and admits the Minister's daughter.*)

DAUGHTER. Have we both passed the physical test—the medical examination? Think I've lost my number (*searching for it*).

EMILY. Your case, Daughter, I certainly have at my fingers' ends. Can recall it offhand.



DAUGHTER. Will I be granted a license to marry Frank?

EMILY. Your Frank's case is not only dark, but painted with thick darkness itself—it's awful!

DAUGHTER. It must be terrible—you can never get me to believe that this man (*a handsome youth of twenty-five, very correct in manner*) is not of sound body and mind. But aren't you jesting?

EMILY. You will soon find out that these are no jesting matters. Frank, this one, that one, or another one, will no longer be permitted to ruin a pure innocent Minister's daughter. or any man's daughter. Marriage to-day is not a blind, uninspected, secondhand article of merchandise—a book which the purchaser knows not the contents of until it is bought and found to be printed in a foreign language—ridiculous? To-day the “survival of the fittest” means that “natural selection” alone will not serve as the best means of weeding out the feeble and the weak in mind and body. It was our solemn duty to adopt certain measures that will assist Nature, in which book the laws of life and of government are to be read. “Nature is universal hygiene.” I'm sorry Frank isn't “fit.”

DAUGHTER. But is it right for me to go into detail—to understand the case from every angle?

EMILY. Yes. The social disease must be spoken in the open and not with bated breath, and must be spoken to the woman no less than to the man. These dreadful diseases embrace among their victims a vast number of virtuous wives and innocent children. The number of virtuous wives suffering from venereal diseases is much larger than the entire number of prostitutes in our country. The wife and unborn child are surely innocent in every sense of the word. The innocent child at birth undergoes a baptism of germs which attack the conjunctiva of the eyes and set up a severe purulent inflammation, which is one of the chief causes of total blindness in children. Daughter, are you prepared to accept all these risks light-heartedly, in the dark, in a heedless dream from which you somehow hope there will be no awful awakening?

DAUGHTER. What disease are you specifically referring to?

EMILY. I am distinctly referring to all the diseases which are more or less responsible for many *innocent victims*, but I am certainly placing special emphasis on the so-

called PLEASURE or JOKE disease—GON-
ORRHEA.

DAUGHTER (*determined to know it all*).
Seeing is conquering.

EMILY (*anxiously*). Then follow me.
(*She follows her to Fanny's room.*)

EMILY (*to Fanny*). Tell all your daughters the *nature* of your operation. Only full knowledge can adequately assist them.

FANNY (*sits up, bursts into tears, rubbing her eyes and placing hand upon her own heart, which beats and grieves for other hearts—how far will the cancer spread?*). Come, come, my dear, we must talk seriously. CIVILIZATION itself is caught dreaming the long, long dream of dreams: tears, and tortures, and the touch of joy—but this time to leave a weight upon our waking thoughts. (*Trying to restrain her sobs.*)

DAUGHTER (*assuming responsibility*). Am I representing, and will I have to report back to CIVILIZATION? If so, I must *feel* that the dark picture is not overdrawn—that relief must come quick.

FANNY (*extending her hand to Daughter, hopefully*). My dear child, it is evident that the object of your visit here is to

test the INNOCENT VICTIM—the play you read, re-read and normally digested. I sincerely hope that your present investigation will soon open a *new* era of married happiness, of attaining the highest culture and refinement which civilization can yield—an era of legislation in the elevation of the race, aided by religion, by science, and by public opinion. (*Indicating a sudden violent pain in the abdominal region.*) Why, Daughter, wasn't the mist of ignorance in *reality* removed in time to have saved me from innocently contracting such a dreadful disease—think from whom! my own husband? Yes! But he alone is not to be condemned. He, like the rest of them, also was traveling in the dark after his deceptive joys. To-day a decent husband should not even *attempt* to commit suicide—well, let him live better to repent his folly and ignorance from his very soul. (*Taking a drink of water.*)

DAUGHTER (*not yet fully realizing the seriousness of the operation*). Has the operating knife left an indelible impression on you?

FANNY (*with sighs*). It has made an incision, and even more than that. The inflammation necessitated a surgical operation

which mutilated my reproductive organs, despoiling me of my womanly qualities, depriving me of the possibilities of motherhood—woman's most sacred coronation—and almost lost my life too in the bargain.

(*Protesting.*) Why do thousands of innocent wives share my fate! Why don't they know that to-day the disease is regarded by the medical profession as one of the most serious and most to be dreaded of any of the diseases to which human flesh is heir! Doesn't in fact the poison remain in the system for years to do its deadly work both to the sorrowing husband himself and to his innocent bride whom he ignorantly, or even deliberately, infects! Why should such men be permitted, with impunity, to make a prey of pure women! Is there any denial of these criminal charges? Answer me! (*A pause.*) Why, then, should not her whole nature revolt against the wedlock with a man whose body is a sink of corruption! Won't it be she who will have to suffer most! Is it not upon the woman that the burden of shame and suffering, of disease and death, is chiefly laid! We, therefore, ask for PROTECTION! Sleeping Lion, can't you be aroused! (*Takes a rest and breathes an atmosphere of contentment*

—believing that her penetrating words have found lodgment in the human heart.)

DAUGHTER (*presently falling under the power of this conviction*). Lady, you have taught me the hardest of all lessons in the world, i. e., thinking. I do now realize the danger to which I, as well as others, would have subjected myself had I failed thus to investigate. Now I *see* things. I'm satisfied we are all clamoring your piteous prayer incessantly: to *regenerate* society. My dear woman, I certainly wish you a speedy recovery.

FANNY (*becomes free from all fear of the blind, elemental forces—a free spirit. The bonds of individuality being momentarily broken, she feels herself in harmony, in union, in deep sympathy with unhappiness and misfortune*). Recovery? It is a relic of the past. Happiness? Darkness is upon the face of the deep. Humanity? There's a body without a form, and void. There will be light, *when?*

(*As the girl is about to step out of the room, enter George, Fanny's husband, handing a bottle of medicine to Emily, who mixes the drugs. As he remarks, pointingly, "Who is the child standing there?" and as the name "child" reaches the patient's ear*

(the thought that thousands of "Rachels are still weeping for their children"), what follows, indeed, is only the natural consequence of the world's evil and the tragic side of life.)

FANNY (*just seen calm and reasonable, becomes excited little by little, her eyes shining brightly, her countenance assuming an expression impossible to describe, and very soon her words, her ideas, her gestures—in short, her whole appearance and all her actions—become nearly approaching those of a maniac in a violent paroxysm*). Give ear, ye midnight prayers for the unfortunate wives, and ye petitions at their graves, and I will speak; and let the world hear the words of my mouth.

With unimpaired vividness of *that* night, which was covered with thick darkness, I see visions of a great beast with two faces, diverse one from another—one laughs, the other cries. The thing which I did not fear came upon me, that which I was not afraid of has overtaken me. I was at ease, I was also quiet, and had rest. But trouble came. I allowed myself to drift with the tide, and entrusted myself to the fury of the waters. I had to suffer from cold, hunger and exposure. Oh, Mother, is not undimming

truth better than illusion? Are angels singing? Oh! fool that I was. There's a certain buzz of a stolen marriage. I have gone in—never to return. I was going after him straightway as an ox goes to his slaughter and knows not that it is for his life.

Where is the conscientious physician, the judge, the lawyer, the clergyman, the educator, or other person who must come to the eleventh-hour rescue—to protect the unoffending wives and innocent children from results which have wrecked many thousands of lives and multitudes of homes! Where are they?

GEORGE (*with perplexity, anguish, and remorse*). I am the HOME-DEVIL! I offer on the spot the general plea of "GUILTY."

(*The girl is seen standing in her place with tears streaming down her face as though paralyzed, while Emily is observed forcing open Fanny's mouth with an instrument, to administer the drug to the exhausted form of an INNOCENT VICTIM.*)

—FINIS.—

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 199 384 2